

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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## Buckets of Hope ministry to Haiti comes to an end

**JACKSON, Ms. (Special)** — Nearly a year after the first buckets began making their way from Southern Baptist churches across North America to Haiti, the gift of love in the form of food buckets is still providing nourishment.

Southern Baptists have provided over 155,000 buckets that have enabled Baptists in Haiti to keep feeding their neighbors whose lives are still in disarray more than a year after the devastating earthquake. Every bucket carries food for a week along with a message of love and hope from Southern Baptists, and is delivered by Haitian Baptists who give a verbal witness to God's love and compassion.

The Buckets of Hope ministry has now come to a close. Jim Didlake, director of the Men's Ministry department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, said, "Some of our people have been there during the distribution and all went well. The local churches handled the distribution, and those receiving buckets were excited. Now the work has been completed."

"The work continues in Haiti. Southern Baptists are in the process of rebuilding homes, and Mississippians have been involved in the rebuild."

## Chinese authorities shut down Easter

**BEIJING (BP)** — As millions of Christians worshipped freely around the world Easter morning, more than 500 members of an unregistered Beijing church were under house arrest by the Chinese communist government and prevented from gathering together at an outdoor site, while another 40 or so were detained after they illegally tried to worship at the location.

It was the third straight week that Shouwang Church defied the Chinese government's demands not to gather together. The clash has drawn worldwide attention, with more than 160 church members detained during the first week and about 50 arrested last week.

Each week, church leaders have released statements saying they would rather obey God than the government. They are attempting to meet outdoors because the government has blocked all attempts by the church to rent or purchase a building.

Churches in China must register with the government, and those that don't are considered illegal. Registering brings restrictions on growth and evangelism — part of the reason the underground church movement has flourished in recent decades. Shouwang is one of the largest house churches in the country.

A British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) camera crew recorded the arrests the first week. A Cable News Network (CNN) crew tried to do the same on Easter but was turned back. The video can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/eaBEqm>.

Hundreds of uniformed and plain-clothed police officers were involved in the Easter arrests, which took place at a public plaza, CNN reported. Police and police cars were waiting at the plaza for the members to gather.

As part of the Easter crackdown, the government prevented all church staff, lay leaders, and the entire church choir from leaving their homes. Senior pastor Jin Tianming, who has led the public defiance, was one of those under house arrest. The choir had been practicing for months for the service, the religious liberty group ChinaAid reported.

Some church members were able to avoid government interference by gathering in smaller groups at restaurants.

"One of the deacons returned to his home last Friday afternoon and the police came to ask him if he planned to attend the Easter Sunday service," church member Kathy Lu told Voice of America News on Easter. "He said yes, so the police said from this moment, you cannot leave this house. I spoke to him an hour ago, and he was still not able to leave the house."

Church members say they are being obedient to Christ. Some have lost their jobs



**UNDER WATCH** — Chinese police monitor a CNN camera crew attempting to report on an illegal Easter church gathering. The Chinese government placed 500 members of Souwang Church under house arrest Sunday and arrested another 40 who tried to meet at the outdoor location. The communist government strictly regulates religious activity and permits only officially-approved churches to meet. (BP photo)

and even been evicted from their homes because of their stance, with the government pressuring employees and landlords.

"The Bible tells us, as Christians, we must not give up meeting together; furthermore, as the church of Jesus Christ, we should not change our mode of Sunday worship just because someone or some entity decides that we may or may not use a particular gathering place," the church said in a statement Easter week.

"Our attitude before God should be the same as Daniel's, that is, despite the pressure and difficulties our circumstance presents, we should behave as we normally would, coming before our God weekly to worship Him and offer up our thanksgiving, praises and petitions."

If the church could rent or own its own indoor space, the confrontation could stop, the statement said.

Observers say it's the hardest crackdown in a decade or more. "We are deeply disappointed that the Chinese authorities chose to disrupt peaceful worshippers who were simply celebrating Easter today," said ChinaAid's founder and president, Bob Fu.

ChinaAid monitors religious liberty in the country. "By doing this, the Chinese government again demonstrates its total disregard for Chinese citizens' basic religious freedom and freedom of assembly. We continue to call upon the free world to stand firm in solidarity with the persecuted faithful in China."

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) had released a pre-Easter statement urging the Chinese

"to allow all Easter services to proceed without harassment or detentions."

USCIRF is a bipartisan religious panel that reports to Congress on religious rights overseas. Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, is a commissioner on the panel.

USCIRF reported that Wang Zu'on, head of China's State Administration for Religious Affairs, gave a speech in February calling on government officials to "renew efforts to guide" unregistered Protestants to worship in state-sanctioned churches and "break" large churches like Shouwang into small groups.

The Global Times, a newspaper run by the Chinese Communist Party, ran an editorial April 11 arguing that "all Christians, as well as those of other faiths, are Chinese citizens first and foremost. It is their obligation to observe discipline and abide by the law."

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said Christians around the world should be praying for Shouwang Church.

"How many of our American church members would disappear if officials went about threatening jobs and college placements?" he asked in a column on his website. "While the New Testament commands Christians to obey the righteous laws of a nation, believers cannot bend the knee to the regime as their primary allegiance."

"No Christian is 'first and foremost' a citizen of any earthly kingdom or nation. This is a despotic demand for the idolatrous worship of the state."



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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are subject to editing.

## High tech gossip



"BUT AFTER GOD ERASES MY SIN FROM HIS MEMORY BANK, AREN'T THEY STORED ON HIS HARD DRIVE SOMEWHERE?"

Dr. James Dobson, with Focus on the Family, pleads for our action. An organization has been granted a Federal Hearing by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in Washington, D.C. Their petition, #2493, would ultimately pave the way to stop the reading of the gospel of our Lord and Savior on the airwaves of America. They got 287,000 signatures to back their stand! If this attempt is successful, all Sunday worship services being broadcast on the radio or by television will be stopped. This group is also campaigning to remove all Christmas programs and Christmas carols from public schools! You, as a Christian, can help! We are praying for at least one million signatures.

This would defeat their effort and show that there are many Christians alive, well, and concerned about our country. As Christians, we must unite on this. Please don't take this lightly. We ignored one lady once and lost prayer in our schools and in offices across the nation. Please stand up for your religious freedom and let your voice be heard. Together we can make a difference in our country while creating an opportunity for the lost to know the Lord.

Please press "forward," clean up the message, and forward this to everyone you think should read this. Now, please sign your name at the bottom. Don't delete any other names, just go to the next number and type your name. Please do not sign jointly, such as Mr. & Mrs. each person should sign his/her own name.

Apparently, many thousands of people have received this breathless e-mail plea over the past several months. Problem is, it's not true.

The urban legend about petition 2493 has circulated with different types of pleas and 'calls for action' for many years. In fact,

**INTERNET RUMORS** — To investigate Internet rumors, first go to the web site of the individual or organization that is mentioned in the e-mail, such as James Dobson and Focus on the Family. The web sites of these individuals and organizations often have special sections devoted to rumors. Secondly, a number of web sites exist for the purpose of dispelling Internet rumors and hoaxes, including [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com) and [www.truthorfiction.com](http://www.truthorfiction.com). (Note: The mention of particular web sites not controlled by The Baptist Record or the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board does not imply endorsement. Caution is recommended.)

Through the years, archeologists and even the Catholic Church have discovered "relics" from the time of Christ, even dating back to the Old Testament. The most famous find was the Dead Sea Scrolls, which have been recognized as one of the greatest archeological finds in history. Other "finds" are sadly ridiculous.

There are hundreds of cathedrals that claim to have the skull of Paul or Peter. There is a church in Ethiopia that claims to have the Ark of the Covenant. Such claims are too common to be believable. Then there was the Shroud of Turin, which was supposedly the burial cloth of Jesus. Add to that statues that weep, the face of Jesus in a tortilla, and a host of other scams and aberrations and it becomes laughable.

Archeology can verify dating and locations. The archeological digs around Israel are incredible to observe. Relics from the Promised Land have to be verified by the government with a certificate of authenticity.

One show I love to watch is the History Channel's The Naked Archeologist. It's entertaining and enlightening, as the host mixes humor with research. Often I don't agree with his conclusions, but it's a fun show to watch.

Earlier this month Linda Gradstein wrote an article posted

faith in the Bible or to warn of a threat against religious liberties. The problem is that by uncritically forwarding some of these e-mails, we often violate the command against bearing false witness, and we hurt the church's credibility when we then try to preach a Gospel of truth," said Focus on the Family senior online editor Greg Hartman, in a recent issue of Focus on the Family magazine. "Christians should not rush to believe, much less repeat, unsubstantiated gossip. After all, it is the glory of kings to search out a matter (Proverbs 25:2). As we damage our credibility, so do we damage our ability to witness to the ultimate truth of the Gospel.

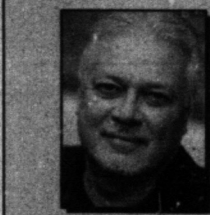
E-mail is a powerful tool, but its ability to quickly, widely, and cheaply disseminate information is only as helpful as the information being spread. As stewards of truth for the rest of the world, Christians need to be judicious in their use of the forwarding button," Hartman said.

That's good advice. In the future, let's all check out such gossip before we promulgate it to others as truth. We'll all be better served

## GUEST OPINION:

### We don't need the nails

By Michael Catt  
Albany, Ga.



on AOL entitled, Did Journalist Find 'THE Nails' Used to Crucify Jesus? In it she writes of Simcha Jacobovici from Canada, host of The Naked Archeologist, as saying "he may have found the nails that were used to crucify Jesus more than 2,000 years ago."

He claims this in a documentary, The Nails of the Cross, which will be broadcast in the United States in a few weeks. In the documentary he presents two Roman nails dating to the first century that were "bent in a way that is consistent with crucifixion." Gradstein writes, "He contends that these are the same nails found in the burial tomb of Caiaphas, the Jewish High Priest who is associated in the Gospels with the crucifixion of Jesus, although he found them at a lab in Tel Aviv University."

Jacobovici says he spent two years trying to find the nails. Professor Israel Hershkovitz

says in the documentary, "Based on the size, shape and condition of the nails, it is possible that these were used in crucifixion." True. Factual. But notice "crucifixion" not "the crucifixion" of Christ. Thousands were crucified by the Romans. It was a common form of death penalty for criminals. There would have been hundreds of nails.

He says it's "possible." Sure it is, but I should tell you, this is the same man who jumped on board with James Cameron on the movie, The Lost Tomb of Jesus. In that controversial film, he says a burial site in Jerusalem is the original burial site of Jesus and his family.

The Israel Antiquities Authority says, "The interpretation presented in it [the documentary] has no basis in archaeological findings or research."

What's my bottom line? It wasn't two nails (or actually

three if anyone reads the Bible) that held Jesus to the cross — it was His love for us and His willingness to die for our sin.

Also, I might note, one reason the first century was the "fullness of time" for Jesus was because there were no cameras or video recorders. If there were, we would worship an image, picture, or painting of Christ. The pictures in our Bibles (and in my children's Bible growing up) make Jesus look like a white man. He was Jewish, olive skinned. We all tend to make Jesus into what we want Him to be.

Even if they are THE nails, they are just nails. I don't worship nails; I worship the Lord who lived, died and rose from the grave. The tomb is empty. We don't need the nails. We have something better: an empty tomb, a resurrected Lord, an ascended Lord, a constant Advocate, and a soon coming King.

Catt, a Mississippi native and graduate of Mississippi College in Clinton, is senior pastor of Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., and executive producer of the Sherwood Productions movies Facing the Giants, Fireproof, and the soon-to-be-released Courageous. This column first appeared on his blog, [MichaelCatt.com](http://MichaelCatt.com), and is reprinted here courtesy of Baptist Press.

## Panel: Bible literacy lacking in churches

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP) — Standing before nearly 700 attendees at a Read the Bible for Life conference, George Guthrie rattled off a series of statistics:

- 25 million copies of the Bible are sold in the United States annually.

- Nine out of 10 homes in the U.S. have a Bible.

- More than 400 million copies of all or part of the Bible are distributed through Bible societies each year.

Despite what would appear to be a Scripture saturation of biblical proportions, the "No. 1 predictor of spiritual maturity [according to a study by LifeWay Research] is reading the Bible on a daily basis [but] only 16% of churchgoers read the Bible daily and 25% of churchgoers don't read the Bible at all," Guthrie said at the April 15-16 conference at Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

"This means that more than 50% of people who come through the doors of our churches on a regular basis only read their Bibles occasionally, perhaps one or two times per month, if at all," Guthrie said. "Even more sobering, only 37% of those who attend church regularly say that reading and studying the Bible has made a significant difference in the way they live their lives. Only 37%."

This alarming lack of biblical literacy is what led Guthrie to write, Read the Bible for Life: Your Guide to Understanding and Living God's Word, released earlier this year by B&H Publishing Group, the trade publishing arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. Guthrie, who serves as Union University's Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible, compiled the book as a series of conversations about how to study the Scriptures in a meaningful way.

The Read the Bible for Life book is just the first component of what has become the Read the Bible for Life initiative spearheaded by LifeWay in partnership with Union's R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies. Other components include a nine-week small-

group video curriculum and readers' study guide. This fall, LifeWay will release a Holman Christian Standard chronological study Bible in support of the initiative.

"Dr. Guthrie's book could not have come at a better time for individuals and churches looking for ways to know God more intimately and be transformed by His Word," said Brad Waggoner, LifeWay's executive vice president. "George Guthrie is one of the world's leading scholars. His bent for scholarship did not remove him in any way from his passion for the local church. He desires for the Word of God to transform His people; that is the key to this emphasis."

The reading and study material is aimed to accomplish two things:

- help people learn to read the parts of Scripture well, so they know how to engage a psalm, an Old Testament story, or a parable and apply the Word in specific life-changing ways.
- help people understand how the Bible fits together so they can understand their place in God's story.

At its core, Guthrie explained, the Read the Bible for Life initiative seeks to change the processes for how followers of Christ interface with the Bible by understanding the dynamics of the overarching "grand narrative" of Scripture. The road to Scripture literacy goes beyond telling people they need to get in the Word and have a devotional time, he said.

"First, we need to look at processes in the local church and not just programs of the moment," Guthrie said. "We need to read and teach people how to read Scripture more effectively and meaningfully, and we need to get into the grand story of Scripture — individually and as a community."

"By doing this, people will begin to realize that 'this is my story and it has implications for my life.' This coordinated attempt at changing patterns and processes of interacting with Scripture is a way to help the church be the church and learn to read the Bible well," Guthrie said.



**BIBLE READERS** — David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala., participates in a panel discussion during the Read the Bible for Life conference in mid-April. Michael Card (left) and George Guthrie, author of Read the Bible for Life book in the biblical literacy initiative, complete the panel. (BP photo)

David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, preached during the conference's three plenary sessions and also participated in a question-and-answer session with Guthrie and musician and author Michael Card.

Platt, author of the bestseller, Radical, noted that Guthrie's material played a crucial role in his church's yearlong "Radical Experiment." Over the course of a year, Brook Hills members were challenged to radically change their modus operandi by praying for the entire world, reading through the entire Bible, committing to multiplying community fellowship groups, sacrificing finances for a specific purpose, and giving time in another context.

As a working laboratory for the Read the Bible for Life teaching material and reader's guide, Guthrie worked a couple of months ahead of the church's schedule to produce reader's guide material as Platt preached chronologically through the Bible.

"We walked through the story of Scripture from cover to cover testing out the Read the Bible for Life curriculum," Platt said. "To see the Word

come alive through this material and through our church was incredible. As a pastor I'm indebted to this."

Guthrie said the Read the Bible for Life curriculum "is a ministry of service. It is our greatest desire to come alongside others to help them in their faith."

Platt said that as the church walked through the chronological reading of the Bible, "people began recognizing key messages and stories that serve as hinges to the redemptive story of Christ. People in our church, some who have been Christians for 20 and 30 years, are saying, 'I never knew how this all fit together.' "As you unpack the grand narrative of Scripture, you start to realize that the God of Peter, James and John [and] of Isaiah, Moses and Abraham is your God. To have your eyes opened to the fact that God, the consuming fire on the mountain, is the same God we meet with... it takes our daily routine up to such a higher level when we realize we are a part of something so much greater: a grand story of redemption."

**Editor's note:** Components of the Read the Bible for Life initiative can be previewed at [www.ReadtheBibleforLife.com](http://www.ReadtheBibleforLife.com).



## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND  
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Call to prayer

**NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST (BP)** — In the crescendo of turmoil across North Africa and the Middle East, people have cried out for something different, something big. It's time believers in the West do the same thing, said Drew Carson (not his real name), a Southern Baptist worker among the peoples of the region. That's why he and others have called for 21 days of prayer and fasting to ask God to do something big in the lives of the peoples of North Africa and the Middle East. The emphasis, stretching to Mother's Day (May 8), encourages believers to "pray outside the box" for the salvation of the region's peoples and for believers working among them. For more information on how to pray for the peoples of North Africa and the Middle East, visit [namepeople.imb.org](http://namepeople.imb.org).

## Looking back

10 years ago

BSU members from Northeast Community College in Booneville spend four days in New Orleans sharing the Gospel, with 23 people praying to receive Christ.

20 years ago

FamilyNet, a broadcast television faith and family network, begins operation under the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, headquartered in Fort Worth, Tex. FamilyNet was formerly part of the Jerry Falwell's ministry organization.

30 years ago

Eighty Mississippi Baptists men, mostly laymen, form the Pioneer Missions Crusade to the West, traveling to Colorado and Nebraska in July.



DMG XBNWN NDCG  
ZMSB SIW EWBEVW.  
LWDY UW MBS, NSDMG  
NSCVV, DMG NWW SIW  
NDVODSCBM BL SIW  
VBYG, PICKI IW PCVV  
NIWP SB UBZ SBGDU;  
LBV SIW WHUESCDMN  
PIBX UW IDOW NWW  
SBGDU, UW NIDVV  
NWW SIWX DHDCM MB  
XBYW LBY WOWY.

WTBGZN LBZYSWWM:  
SICYSWVN

Clue: Z = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Isaiah Fifty-Two: Six

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MS QUARTET CONVENTION June 9-11, 2011 • Forrest Co. Multipurpose Center in Hattiesburg. Thurs. 6:30pm: DOVE BROTHERS, Chronicle, Homecoming, FRI 6pm: MSQC Awards, Talley Trio, Red Roots, Others. Sat. 1pm-10pm: Mark Trammell QT, Mike Bowling Family, Ricky Atkinson, Red Roots, Riders, Others (AM Talent Contest) www.msqa.com or 601-466-4343 Ticket & RV information.

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THE SPECIAL UNSEEN  
ESSENTIAL PEOPLE IN GOD'S  
KINGDOM WORK

There are some people who are not seen by many people or highly visible to the entire body of Christ, but they are absolutely essential and what they do is priceless. I want to talk to you about three groups of these folks, but let me quickly say there are more than just the ones that I am going to mention. I suppose that if I just focused on every essential unseen group, I could fill The Baptist Record completely. Allow me to talk to you about some that in the last few days have so blessed my heart that I had to say something about them.

**Group I is the sound and media people at each of our churches.** There are very few of our churches who do not have sound systems these days, regardless of the size of the church or even if you can hear without a sound system. There is so much in today's world that adds to many of our worship services because of soundtracks with orchestration that might not be available, words that may be projected on a screen, or a video clip that helps to convey the message and dramatize a point.

About the only time that these folks ever have the spotlight put on them is when something does not work properly. That may be only once a quarter but even if it were once every service that something went wrong or the wrong button was punched, they are doing a better job than I would and probably better than some of you. It takes preparation, concentration, and a certain amount of knowledge and skill level to keep it all working at the very



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

time and in the way that it is needed. It is not just a matter of flipping on a switch and everything working. It has to be coordinated. In addition to knowing about all of the equipment, you have to know what is going to be taking place in the service.

I mention these sound and media folks because I am often in churches where everything goes so smoothly that you do not even realize that these men and women are around. The Apostle Paul asked in Romans, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" The proclamation of the Word of God and the sound of the Gospel are essential for people to come to know the Lord. In addition to that, in our day there are often settings where it might be asked, "How shall the preacher be heard if there are not faithful men and women at their post working, caring, and indeed ministering in the sound booth?"

**Group II is the Disaster Relief teams.** The tornadoes that raked across our state in mid-April 2011 were reminders of how important and how essential these wonderful men and women are who prepare before the storms hit to be involved in Disaster Relief. Here in our state we live with impending disasters. You name it and potentially we can have it. Tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and fires — and every so often someone is writing an article on the latest stage that indicates that at some point the New Madrid Fault is going to shift and we will feel the earth move. Regardless of what we may face, there are trained and willing responders all across our state ready to provide support

and help in the face of disaster. They willingly and readily are there on the scene with food, medical supplies, and a chainsaw or cleanup crew. They clean and "mud out." They rip out soaked sheetrock, cover roofs with vinyl sheeting, and touch thousands and thousands of lives with the love of Jesus. They are rarely seen, often unrecognized, but always essential when disaster strikes.

It has been my observation through the years that these folks do not love disasters, but they love responding to assist people in whatever way they can to bring help and hope in the Spirit of Christ. To each one of you who are a part of these teams, I want to say a huge thank you for the thousands and thousands of people across our state that you have blessed. For the hundreds of thousands of you who have shared your resources to enable these responders to be there, I echo the same appreciation. One person, one congregation, one association, or one state convention cannot do this often-unseen but vitally-necessary work. It is a magnificent network of teams who in just a matter of hours can be on the move and usually on the scene to help minister, pray, or cut down trees in the suddenness of life's disasters.

A third group that I would call attention to is the wonderful preschool

workers who take care of bed babies, creepers, and toddlers during the worship service. From time to time as I am preaching in some of our churches, I walk through that area of church life to see the children and speak to their caregivers. I pray for these folks often because they are the ones who are working hard, loving, and caring for our special treasures when the service goes longer than expected. They are the wonderful people who get up, get dressed, and are ready to come to church with a sweet and gracious spirit to miss the grandeur of the worship service in order to care for the precious children of others. Often after someone has sung a beautiful solo, I listen as people applaud and express their appreciation but I am thinking about the people who are in another part of the building taking care of the needs of those precious gifts from God with skill and care. They may never receive applause, hear many words of thanks, and may not even receive a thought from us. I want to say thank you to this wonderful group for all that you do to provide ministry both to the children, their parents, and to so many others. You are a blessing!

Once in the ministry of Jesus, a discussion was taking place as to who was the greatest in the Kingdom. Jesus picked up a little child and in essence, He said, "You are looking at it." To all of you who are serving in these or maybe other areas of unseen but essential needs, I want to say thank you and to give you my applause of appreciation.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

## NOBTS trustees approve Islamic studies specialization

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Trustees of New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) approved a new master's specialization in Islamic studies, along with a new graduate certificate for bivocational ministers and revisions to graduate degrees and certificates during their spring meeting April 13.

The board also approved a \$20.9 million budget and elected six faculty members.

The new master of divinity specialization in Islamic studies is the fruit of several years of work. The first step was securing faculty members with the experience and knowledge base to lead the program. In recent years, trustees elected Mike Edens and Page Brooks to the faculty as professors of theology and Islamic studies.

Edens served with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention for more than 25 years in the North Africa/Middle East region. Edens' unique experience and understanding of Islamic culture prepared him to train the next generation of missionaries for the world's growing Muslim population.

In addition to his academic study of Islamic thinking, Brooks also draws experience from short-term mission encounters with Muslims and, most recently, from eight months in Iraq as a military chaplain.

"This degree is our response to the crucial missional challenge of preparing a generation of leaders to understand Islam and how to explain the Gospel to the Islamic peoples of the world," NOBTS President Chuck Kelley said.

The board unanimously approved a plan to update and

revise each graduate degree and certificate. Based on 18 months of research, the faculty and administration developed modest revisions designed to better prepare students for ministry in the 21st century. In most cases, the changes resulted in more focused degree plans with fewer total hours.

Trustees affirmed revisions to the standard M.Div. degree during their December 2010 meeting. The goal of the revision was to strengthen the focus on biblical studies, discipleship strategies, and church revitalization and to streamline the degree by eliminating or combining overlapping courses.

Since the standard M.Div. serves as the basis for all the seminary's specialized M.Div. programs, the revisions impact each specialization as well as master of arts degrees and graduate certificates.

Provost Steve Lemke said the seminary is developing guidelines to help students make a smooth transition when the revisions take effect in August.

"All of our current students should be able to graduate no later than they are currently scheduled. Since the new degree has fewer hours, some students who follow carefully the advice of their academic adviser may be able to graduate a semester earlier," Lemke said.

Trustees approved a \$20.9 million budget, down slightly from last year's \$21 million budget. In spite of decreased Cooperative Program contributions, trustees were able to pass a balanced budget with only minor increases to student tuition and housing rates.

Although six faculty members were elected by the

trustees, there was a net cost reduction from the previous year's budget, largely because one election represented a move from full- to part-time status. Four of the faculty members had been serving full-time in some capacity, either by presidential appointment or a different trustee-elected status. Two filled critical vacant budgeted positions to assure adequate faculty support for all NOBTS programs.

"Even though the recent drop in Cooperative Program income forced us to lay off some faculty members, the election of these key additions gives us the faculty members we need to maintain all our current degrees and specializations with excellence," Lemke said.

Trustees elected Damian Emetuche as assistant professor of church planting; Ian Jones, professor of psychology and counseling; Randall Stone, associate professor of Christian education; Chris Turner, assistant professor of voice; and Bob Welch, professor of church administration. Dan Holcomb, who joined the NOBTS faculty in 1979, was elected as senior professor.

Emetuche, Jones, and Turner joined the faculty in October 2010 as presidential appointments. Emetuche serves as director of the seminary's Day Center for Church Planting and is jointly endorsed by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and NOBTS. In his role as Nehemiah Project church planting professor, Emetuche trains church planters for ministry in North America.

A native of Nigeria, Emetuche has served as a NAMB church planter in Ohio

and Washington. Before coming to the United States, he served as a pastor in Nigeria and a missionary and church planter in Ivory Coast. He speaks English, French and Igbo.

Jones came to NOBTS last year after serving on the faculty of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth from 1997-2010. Following the deadly Sept. 15, 1999, shootings at Wedgwood Church in Fort Worth, Jones counseled the survivors. Research gleaned from his experience with the tragedy is included in his book, *The Counsel of Heaven: Foundations for Biblical Christian Counseling*.

Stone joins the faculty after 35 years of local church ministry, most recently as associate pastor/minister of education at Southcliff Church in Fort Worth. A Louisiana native and graduate of NOBTS and Midwestern Seminary, Stone has served as an adjunct professor at Southwestern Seminary, Liberty University Online, and the NOBTS Baton Rouge Extension.

One of Stone's primary tasks will be leading the seminary's doctor of educational ministry program.

Turner is a skilled church music practitioner. Currently serving as minister of music at First Church in Baton Rouge, Turner has 15 years of experience in local church music ministry. Turner served as a graduate assistant at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge from 2006-2010 while completing his doctor of musical arts degree. During the 2009-10 school year, he served as an adjunct professor at NOBTS.

Welch comes to NOBTS three years after retiring from the faculty of Southwestern Seminary

where he was dean of the school of educational ministries. Before his 17-year tenure at Southwestern, Welch was a career Navy officer and had spent five years as a professor and Navy ROTC leader at the University of Oklahoma. Welch has authored three books on church administration and contributed to five others.

In other action trustees also approved:

- A new graduate certificate in bivocational ministry.
- Church leadership certificates at Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans and Living Faith Christian Church in Long Island, N.Y. (The launch of the New York site is contingent on the seminary gaining approval from the New York State Department of Education, which has unusually stringent accreditation standards.)

The board granted the following faculty rank promotions:

- Scott Drumm, from associate professor to professor of theological and historical studies in Leavell College.
- Lloyd Harsch, from associate professor to professor of church history.

- Preston Nix, from associate professor to professor of evangelism and evangelistic preaching.

- Craig Price, from associate professor to professor of New Testament and Greek.

- Bob Stewart, from associate professor to professor of philosophy and theology.

- Laurie Watts, from associate professor to professor of educational technology in Leavell College.

Trustees also granted tenure to Dennis Phelps, professor of preaching and director of church relations and alumni.

## OBITUARY

1. Charles "Puddin" Davis, age 74, died peacefully April 7, in Jackson. Born to Robert Davis and Olive Flanagan Davis in Pittsboro, he grew up in Grenada where he was a star athlete and scholar. Elected Mr. Grenada High School in 1954, he lettered in every sports and was selected to the All-American High School Football team. At Mississippi College, he continued his education and his commitment to the ministry and to all the sports he loved. He graduated with special distinction and was selected as Mr. Mississippi College his senior year. In 1980, he was inducted into the MC Sports Hall of Fame. He continued his education at Southern Seminary in KY and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Davis served as a pastor in Alabama and Louisiana before joining the faculty at Mississippi College in 1973 in the Bible Department. Survivors include his wife, Nancy, his sister, Polly Davis, both of Clinton, his daughter, Dana Davis Morris, her husband, Jeff Morris and their three children, Taylor, Brooke and Evan Morris, all of Houston, Texas. A Charles "Puddin" Davis Scholarship Fund established a few years ago continues to issue awards to MC students who excel in academics and serve as Christian leaders on the Clinton campus. Donations can be made to the fund at Mississippi College Office of Advancement, Box 4005, Clinton, Mississippi 39058.

2. Harris Kindel Counce Jr., 80, died April 14 at Magnolia Regional Health Care Center. Counce was a 1950 Graduate of Corinth High School. He graduated from Mississippi College where he received his Bachelors degree in 1956, and attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army- National Guard during the Korean War, as a Sergeant and a cook. Counce served in many locations including South Corinth; Wayside, Scobe; Holly; Emmanuel, Grenada; Iuka; Colonial, Memphis; First, Ripley; Kossuth; and Director of Missions for Prentiss Association. He started a campground ministry at Mill Creek & was founder of Master's Mount at J.P. Colman State Park. Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Mary Ida Miller Counce of Corinth; daughters, Nancy Counce Bailey of Culman, Ala., Netia Counce Caviness of Ripley, Nebra Counce King(Ken) of Memphis, Tenn., Nenna Counce Stubbs (Steve) of Ripley, and Nandra Counce Nabors of Ripley; two sons; Jonathan Counce(Lisa) of Muscat, Oman, and Phillip Counce (Amy) of Tupelo; one brother, Dicky Counce of New Iberia, La.; one sister, Sue Counce Mullins of Corinth; grandchildren, Eric Bailey, Jamie Cahill, Amy VanHorn, Samantha Bailey, Betsey Caviness

Brown, Joseph Caviness, Katie Caviness Hodges, Valerie King Janeczek, Miranda King McGhee, Kimberly King, Amanda Stubbs Massengill, Jessica Stubbs Williams, Stephanie Stubbs, Robert Nabors, Ben Nabors, Graham Counce, Adam Hilderbrand, Leland Counce, Luke Counce, and Emma Counce, twenty-five great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents Harris Kindel Counce, Sr. and Ernestine Leora Stricklin Counce.

3. Billy Joe Payne, 63, died April 8. He was born April 11, 1947, in Bryson City, North Carolina. He attended Tennessee Temple Bible College and graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. He was pastor at Jones Chapel Church, Nettleton, for the past 17 years. Services were April 10 at Jones Chapel Church. Survivors include his wife of 41 years, Judy Payne, Nettleton; one daughter, Michelle Payne Lewis (Tim), Fulton; four sisters, Gladys Bryant of Michigan, Millie Myers of Michigan, Lois Orr of North Carolina, and Ruth Ash of North Carolina; his mother-in-law, Louise Wood, Nettleton; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; a brother, Dempsey Payne; his stepmother Estelene Payne; and his father-in-law, Benjamin E. Wood.

**Mississippi Baptist State Church Softball Tournaments**

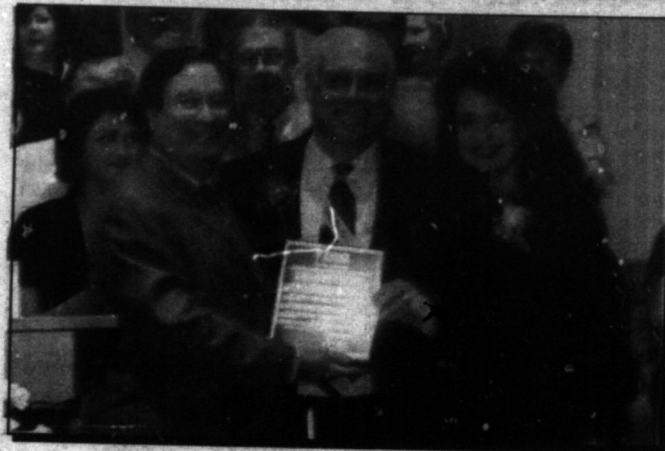
Tournament	SS Enrollment	Dates	Cost	Final Deadline
Adult Co-ed	All Churches	May 13-14	\$200	May 1
Men Class A	1-300	July 29-30	\$200	July 1
Men Class AA	301-700	July 29-30	\$200	July 1
Men Class AAA	701 and up	July 15-16	\$200	July 1

All Tournaments will be held in Pearl, MS at the Center City Complex.

For more information or to download a registration form go to [www.msbaaptistrecreation.com](http://www.msbaaptistrecreation.com) or call 601.898.4969.

East Hill Baptist Church located in the City of Pensacola Florida is seeking a pastor to lead the church. The church currently has 570 members and average Sunday School attendance of 225. The successful candidate must meet the Biblical qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4. The church membership expects the successful candidate to have a minimum of 6 years of successful pastoral experience, a bachelor's degree from an accredited college plus seminary master's degree. Resumes will be accepted until June 30, 2011. Resumes including educational information, pastoral experience, personal skills, and at least three professional references are to be mailed or delivered to: Pastor Search Team Chair, East Hill Baptist Church, 3960 Spanish Trail, Pensacola, Florida 32504.





4. Williams appreciation



5. First Church, Gautier

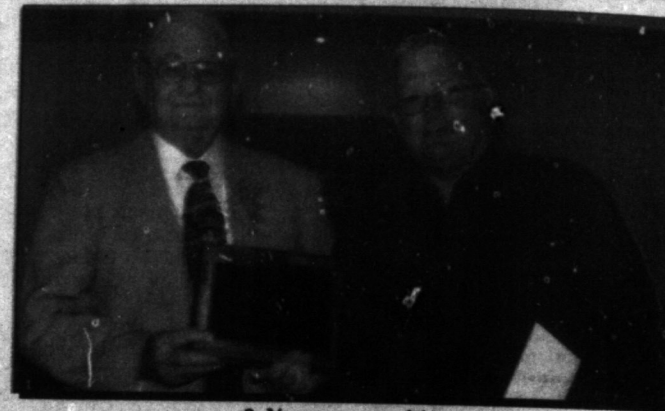


6. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto



7. Enterprise Church, Enterprise

1. Holly Church, Alcorn, will host the Dixie Echoes Quartet May 29, 6 p.m., followed by a fellowship meal. A love offering will be received. John Boler, pastor.
2. First Church, Jackson, is hosting Bill Gaither and his homecoming friends May 19, 7 p.m. Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased online at [www.1tickets.com](http://www.1tickets.com) or by phone at (800) 965-9324.
3. Southside Church, Aberdeen, will host a singing featuring Still Blessed May 22. A covered dish luncheon will be held immediately following the morning worship service which starts at 10:30 am with singing starting at 1:30 pm.
4. First Church, Holly Springs, held a celebration March 20 in honor of minister of music, Robert Williams, on his 25th anniversary. Williams was presented with the love offering and a plaque of appreciation followed by a luncheon. Shown are Williams, Sharon Williams, and Curtis Ferrell.
5. First Church, Gautier, presented a dinner theater Apr. 2 and 3, The Day He Wore My Crown, with over 175 people attending each night. Shown are the participants.
6. The children's choir of Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto, presented the musical The Easter Miracle Apr. 17. Shown are the participants.
7. GA's and moms from Enterprise Church, Enterprise, attended the annual Mom & Me overnight at Camp Garaywa. Shown are the participants.
8. Pine Forest Church, Montgomery Association, held a special day of recognition for Walter Yeager on April 17, in celebration of 32 years of service. Yeager served the church on two separate occasions. Shown is Jerald Woods presenting Yeager with a plaque and a gift of appreciation.
9. Enon Church, Panola County Association, held its annual Easter egg hunt. Shown are pastor Keith Bolen and the participants.
10. Gaston Church, Booneville, hosted Gaston Outdoors on Mar. 1. There were over 320 in attendance, with 12 praying to receive Christ and 20 other decisions made. Troy Ruiz, guest speaker. Shown are the volunteers who planned and organized the event.



8. Yeager recognition



9. Enon Church, Panola County Association

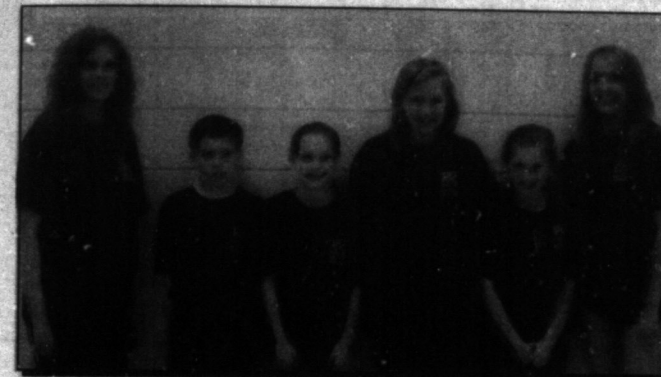


10. Gaston Church, Booneville

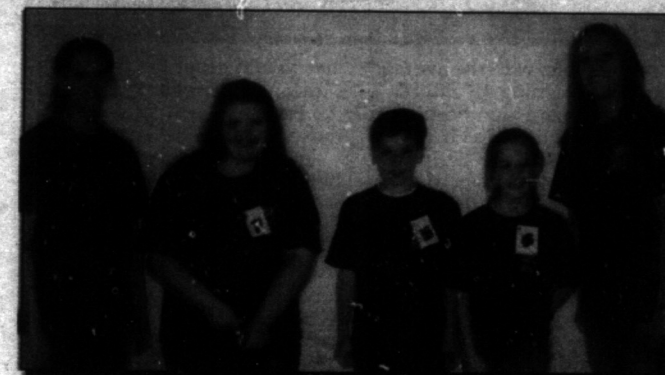
## REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. New Montpelier Church, Montpelier: Homecoming, May 15; program, 10:30 a.m. - noon, with music by Steve and Becky Carver, followed by fellowship meal and The Master's Quartet, 1:30 p.m.
2. Sardis Church, Smith County Association: Revival, May 15 - 18; Sun. services followed by lunch and song service; Jim Futral, speaker.
3. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto: Homecoming, May 1; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m. with cemetery offering taken, followed by lunch. Gerald Ladner, speaker; Hal Hatten, pastor.
4. Salem Church, Kemper County: 150th anniversary, May 1; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the ground; singing provided by the children, grandchildren, of former church members; former pastors are invited to attend.
5. Goss Church, Columbia: Homecoming, May 1; services, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; Jerry Mixon and Ken Hedgepeth leading the service.
6. Grace United Church, Decatur: Revival, Apr. 28 - 30; 7 p.m. nightly; Danny Lanier, speaker; Paul Davis, music; Mark McDonald, pastor.

## BIBLE DRILLS



1a. Ackerman Church, Ackerman



1b. Ackerman Church, Ackerman



2. Freney Church, Freney

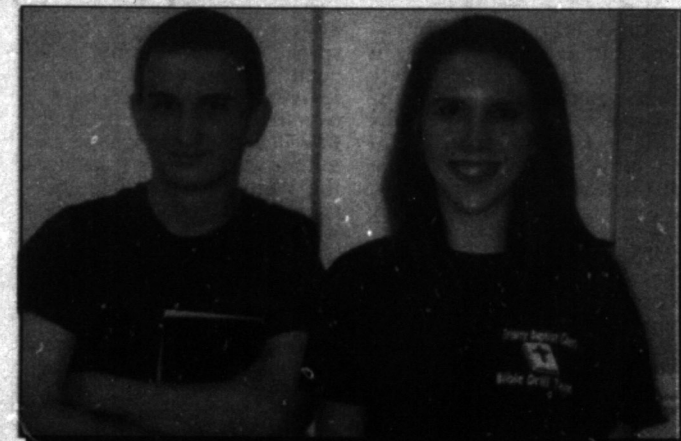


3. Bible Drill at Newhebron Church, Newhebron



4. Bible Drill at Branch Church, Morton

1. Ackerman Church, Ackerman, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown, photo 1, are Hayes Wood, Halea Wood, Chloe Jenkins, and Rylee Bowman. Photo 2, state drillers Michelle Parker, Hayes Woods, and Halea Wood.
2. Freney Church, Freney, recognizes all its Bible Buddies, children and student Bible Drill participants.
3. Newhebron Church, Newhebron, held Bible Drills on March 31. Shown are participants and their leaders: Glenda Westmoreland, Jack Chavis, Eli Riley, Alana Lambert, Hayden Groover, and Renee McCool.
4. Branch Church, Morton, held Bible Drill on March 27. Participants included (from left) Zachary Irby, Michael Ray Latham, and Hunter Ragan. All three advanced to the Scott Association Bible Drill.
5. Trinity Church, Fulton, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are Justin Barnes and Hannah Parker.
6. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are Georganna Allen, Karly Leake, and Carrie Pyatt.
7. First Church, Greenville, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown, front, are James Word, Malia Nichols, Melanie Word, and Richard Word. Back, Leanna Salley, Dawson Gray, David Salley, and Collin Salley.
8. Union Seminary Church, Laurel, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are Bailey Hill, Landon Elkins, and Brennen Green. Sue Carol Green, leader.



5. Trinity Church, Fulton



6. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto



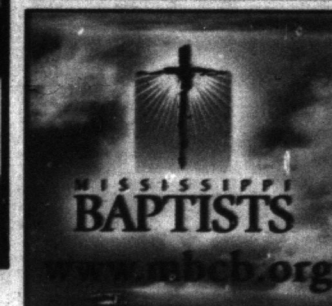
7. First Church, Greenville



8. Union Seminary Church, Laurel



Visit us online at [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org) to learn more about Mississippi Baptist opportunities.





# KJV still ranking high with America's Bible readers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Four hundred years after it debuted as the first widely distributed Bible for the English-speaking world, the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible still holds a place of distinction among Americans, according to a new survey by LifeWay Research.

The poll, conducted to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Version, found that more than half of all American adults (62%) own a KJV Bible. Among those who read the Bible regularly, the percentage of KJV owners is even higher. A full 82% of Americans who read the Bible at least once a month own a KJV. Sixty-seven percent of American adults who own a Bible have a KJV.

Published in 1611 under the direction of England's King James I, the KJV has wielded significant influence over both religion and language among English speakers, generating now-common phrases such as "fight the good fight," "reap the whirlwind" and "feet of clay."

"Christians believe that God's Word is truth and that truth is conveyed through language — thus translations have

always been integral to the spread of Christianity," said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. "It is hard to overstate the influence of the KJV not just on language and idioms, but because it brought the Word of God to English-speaking peoples in the first widely available format."

When asked to indicate whether five specific statements had been their experience with the KJV, many Americans respond positively to: "I have found the language to be beautiful" (31%) and "I have found the language to be easy to remember" (23%).

The experience of some is less complimentary, responding, "I have found the language to be hard to understand" (27%) and "I have found the language to be outdated" (16%). More than a quarter of adult Americans (27%) indicate they have never read the KJV for themselves. An additional four percent did not feel any of the statements matched their experience and four percent "don't know."

Women are more likely than men to own a KJV, with 72% of women who own a Bible having a KJV copy compared with 62%

of men. Age is also a significant factor related to KJV ownership. While 76% of Americans 55 years and older who own a Bible have a KJV, 67% of those ages 35-54 own a copy. For those under 35 years old, the percentage owning a copy drops to 56%.

Younger Americans also have less experience reading the KJV. Thirty-five percent of those under 35 have never read a KJV. Twenty-nine percent of those between 35-54 have never read a KJV along with 19% of those 55 and older.

However, the lower readership among young Americans does not seem to indicate that they have more difficulty understanding the language than their older counterparts. Only 21% of those under 35 say they find the language "hard to understand," compared with 31% of ages 35-54 who say the same and 28% of ages 55 and older.

Readers of all generations find the KJV's language beautiful. However, Americans in the South are more likely to say they "have found the language to be beautiful" (44%).

When all translations are included, 89 percent of American households own at



least one Bible, with the average household owning 4.1 Bibles.

Yet there is a significant gap in Bible ownership between those who read the Scriptures regularly and those who do not. Americans who read the Bible at least once a month own an average of 5.8 Bibles while those who read it less than once a month own an average of 2.2. Women own an average of 4.7 Bibles compared with 3.6 for men.

Approximately half of all adult Americans (53%) indicate they personally read the Bible once a month or more. There are fewer non-Bible readers ages 55 and older than in any other age group. Eighteen percent of those

age 55 and older never read the Bible, whereas 26% of Americans 35-54 and 28% of those under 35 never read it.

Women are more likely to be Bible readers, with 60% of women and 46% of men reading the Bible once a month or more.

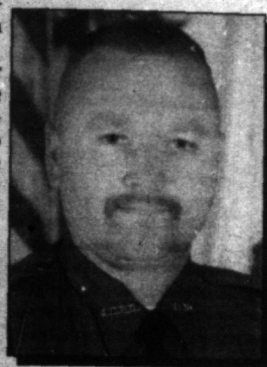
"The power and inherent truth of Scripture comes from having God as its author," McConnell said. "One's willingness to engage the Bible determines its effect upon a life. Numerically, Bible ownership is similar to the percentage of Americans who indicate they are Christian, but owning a Bible and reading it are two different things."

# Bible marks reveal spirit of slain Georgia policeman

ATHENS, Ga. (BP) — It's a Christian, a deacon, Sunday practice pastor Randy Crowe of Hull Church does not like, but it often gives him comfort.

Whenever asked to give the eulogy at a funeral, Crowe asks to see the Bible belonging to the deceased. Pages with scribbles, highlights, and dog-eared corners often tell him about that individual's relationship with Christ. It's a strong sign that person understood and lived to carry out God's grace.

So it was that Crowe carried the burgundy Thompson Chain Reference Bible belonging to slain senior police officer Buddy Christian to a podium in Athens, Ga., as nearly 2,500 looked on March 27.



Christian

leader at Hull Church, was shot twice the previous Tuesday in responding as backup to a call. The suspect, 33-year-old Jamie Hood, eluded a manhunt for several days before giving himself up to authorities on live television that Friday night.

Another officer shot by Hood is expected to recover. "I could see in Buddy's Bible where he had underlined verses and marked pages," said Crowe, who has led Hull Church 18 years. "There were study clippings and notes where he prepared his Sunday School lessons. If a person didn't know Buddy Christian, they

could open his Bible and know he was dedicated. It was important to him."

Written on the inside cover is a message from Christian's wife Melissa:

To my husband, I love you so much. Merry Christmas, 1997

Buddy Christian began attending Hull Church as a teen and grew into a youth leader. A card from 1990 committing to pray for his youth group remained in his Bible. "He was very active," Crowe said, "and the kind of young man with leadership you could see, even at that age. Others looked up to him."

Crowe said Christian had been with the Athens Police Department for about eight years and had kept Bibles in his police cruiser and locker at work. In an occupation rife with danger, a favorite passage was Ephesians 6:10-20, where believers are told to put on the full armor of God.

"He wasn't afraid to share his faith," Crowe said. "He would speak to anyone about it. He didn't ever want to give up on people. In his view the people he arrested just needed someone to care [about them]."

In addition to other duties at Hull Church, Christian operated the sound system and church sign. The Wednesday before he died, he came by on an off day to install a wireless modem to the front sign.

"He did that sort of thing a lot," church secretary Lorra McGough said. "He was a farrier and would shoe horses for people. His wife has a passion for horses and so he'd do that for her and friends. He was a very well-rounded person."

A note in Christian's Bible contains a definition of courage: Standing up for what we know is right.

"His role was to help people. It's why he became an officer," Crowe, pastor to six officers at Hull Church, said. "Buddy felt

God put him in a position to help where others couldn't."

A brief break from police work to another county government department only solidified Christian's calling. Back on the force, he took a part-time job in security at Georgia Square Mall to better provide for Melissa and their children, Callie, age five, and Wyatt, age two. While on duty he'd gravitate to a children's store and read to the kids, explaining what officers did and that the children didn't need to be afraid.

"He'd teach the same thing to the kids at church," Crowe said.

Flipping through Christian's Bible, the pastor noted one passage, Colossians 1:5: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel."

It was the only passage Crowe noticed underlined in red. One word is scribbled in the margin: Grace.

# Senate turns back effort to drop Planned Parenthood funding

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Senate rejected April 14 the last effort to defund the country's leading abortion provider for what remains of the 2011 budget year.

On the same day the U.S. House of Representatives again approved such a proposal, senators voted 58-42 against a resolution to bar federal money for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliates during the remainder of the fiscal year, which closes Sept. 30. Following the same pattern, the Senate defeated in a 53-47 roll call an effort to eliminate funds for last year's health-care reform law, which authorizes federal subsidies for insurance plans that cover abortion.

Both chambers passed the overall budget agreement, which will go into effect without the funding bans as a result of the Senate votes. The agreement will cut about \$38 billion from last year's spending level.

It was no surprise that the proposals to defund Planned Parenthood and the health-care law failed in a Senate controlled by Democrats and abortion-rights supporters. Five Republicans joined the 53-member Democratic caucus in turning back the Senate resolution to defund Planned Parenthood. The 53-47 vote against the proposal to rescind funds for the health-care law was along party lines.

The House voted 241-185 to eliminate money for Planned Parenthood, with 10 Democrats joining Republicans in the majority. Seven GOP members opposed the measure. The proposal to defund the health-care law was 240-185. Three Democrats voted with 237 Republicans for the resolution. No GOP members opposed it.

The votes for the overall budget legislation were 81-19 in the Senate and 260-167 in the House.

The approved budget includes a pro-life funding victory and some cuts to grants to abortion-rights advocates. It restores a ban on funds for elective abortions in the District of Columbia. It also cuts \$15 million for the United Nations Population Fund from its appropriation of \$55 million in 2010 and \$73 million in international family planning funds from \$648 million last year.

Pro-life leaders expressed disappointment in the failure to defund Planned Parenthood, which reported more than 332,000 abortions in 2009, and the health-care law, which critics have dubbed Obamacare.

"Sadly, the Senate rejection of the defunding of Planned Parenthood and of Obamacare means that these

two moral blights on the American governmental landscape survived for a little longer," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville.

Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council, said, "Unfortunately, it is clear that the pro-abortion majority in the Senate continues to show they are more loyal to Planned Parenthood than they are to protecting taxpayers from paying for big-abortion."

Perkins is not related to the editor of The Baptist Record, William H. Perkins Jr.

Land said Americans who consider funding Planned Parenthood and Obamacare to be "morally reprehensible" should be encouraged that 37 Senate seats are up for election in 2012, only two years after sweeping the more pro-life GOP into the House majority.

"In our system of government, the House of Representatives is most sensitive to the mood of the people, since the entire House is elected every two years," he said. "The presidency is the second most responsive, since the president is elected every four years. And the Senate is purposely the most difficult to change with only a third of that body being elected every two years."

"The overwhelming nature of the House vote against the funding of Planned Parenthood and Obamacare as a result of the 2010 election should encourage opponents of supporting these programs that the Senate and the White House will be more reflective of the House vote after the 2012 election," Land said.

The ERLC and others oppose the health-care law not only because it allows subsidies for insurance plans that cover abortion but also because it mandates Americans purchase health insurance, will produce greater government involvement in medical care and likely will increase both taxes and the federal deficit.

Land described the budget cut in the overall measure as "an important baby step in the right direction," despite how inconsequential it is when compared to the national debt, which is more than \$14.4 trillion.

"This resolution will save about \$315 billion of government money that will not be spent over the next 10 years," he said. "Given the astronomical size of our financial predicament, because the federal government under both Democratic and Republican leadership has been spending money that it doesn't have for a generation, these numbers are a truly tiny baby step in the right direction of reducing federal expenditures."

"However, as small as the numbers are, it's the largest reduction in federal spending in a generation and, at least, it's a step, however small, in the right direction rather than in the wrong direction."

"Senator John McCain has often said that to accuse our Congress of spending money like a drunken sailor on weekend leave is an insult to his inebriated shipmates because at least when they run out of money they quit spending," Land said. "Our Congress is currently borrowing 41 cents of every dollar it spends. It is engaging in generational theft from our children and grandchildren, and it must stop."

Describing the resolution to defund her organization as an "extreme proposal," Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richard said all the "political maneuvering accomplished was to show that the House leadership is willing to sacrifice women's health to advance a narrow ideological agenda."

Planned Parenthood and its affiliates received \$363.2 million in government grants and contracts during the 2008-09 fiscal year, the most recent year for which statistics are available. Some of that total came from state and local governments. It recently issued new rules requiring at least one clinic per affiliate to perform abortions. Although federal funds do not go directly to abortions, pro-life advocates contend federal money frees up other contributions to Planned Parenthood for the promotion and performance of abortions.

The fight over funding for Planned Parenthood followed undercover investigations in recent years by the pro-life organization Live Action that have shown Planned Parenthood employees demonstrating a willingness to assist sex traffickers of minor girls, to cover up sexual abuse of underage females and to receive donations designated for abortions of African-American babies. Another clandestine effort showed clinic personnel providing erroneous information about fetal development.

From 1996 to 2009, a measure known as the Dornan Amendment barred federal and congressionally approved local funds for the District of Columbia from paying for elective abortions.

## COLLEGE NEWS

1. Brian Bullock, Tylertown, and Toriya Mandishona, Harare, Zimbabwe, were recently named Mr. and Miss William Carey University, 2011.

2. Andrew Harper, William Carey University, will be leading Mississippi Baptist college students on missions and in ministry in the coming year. Harper, who will serve as WCU's Baptist Student Union president for the 2011 through 2012 school year, was recently elected statewide president of the Mississippi Baptist Student Union.

3. Thirteen students from William Carey University's College of Osteopathic Medicine's (WCUCOM) Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) participated in DO Day on Capitol Hill, which was held in conjunction with the SOMA Spring Convention in Washington, D.C. April 7-10. The students, along with Ed Williams, Executive Director of Mississippi Osteopathic Medical Association, had the opportunity to talk with members of Congress on various healthcare issues and participate in workshops.



1. Mr. and Miss William Carey University



2. Andrew Harper



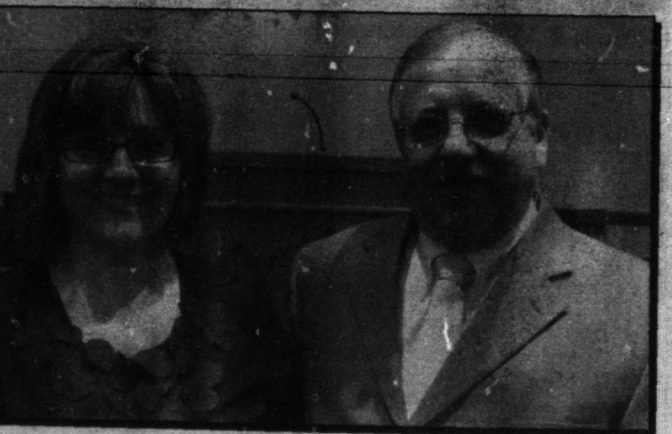
3. Carey medical students

## STAFF CHANGES

1. Doug Johnson is available for pulpit supply in the central Mississippi area. Call (662) 571-4998 or 746-8621.

2. Calvary Church, Bogie Chitto, has called Hal Hatten as pastor. He comes from Cuba Church, Cuba, Ala. Shown are Hatten and his wife, Pam.

3. Mike Willoughby has announced his retirement. A native of Clinton, he received his Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi College in Clinton, and his Master of Divinity from the New Orleans Seminary. For the past 43 years, Mike has served as Sr. Pastor at churches in Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, and Alabama. Willoughby is available for supply and interims. A reception will be held in his honor at the Baptist Healthplex on the campus of Mississippi College, May 29 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. He may be contacted at 123 West Laurel Lane, Etowah, NC or at (828) 891-5822.



2. The Hattens





**"Oh, you'll just leave"**

These are the words of a little boy that keep David and Deborah Lott, Houseparents at The Baptist Children's Village, steadfast in their commitment to children in their care.



The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board has designated May 1-7, 2011 as Christian Home Week. How appropriate that The MBCB has also, since 1967, recognized the culmination of this week, Mother's Day, as the day of emphasis for The Baptist Children's Village ministry. The BCV daily models Christian family values in homes strategically placed throughout Mississippi. We also work with families whose children live with us, to build a stronger and healthier home so their child/children can one day return to them.

Please pray for struggling families in our state. Pray also for David and Deborah and other Houseparents serving throughout The Baptist Children's Village ministry, that they will continue to rely on God's strength, wisdom and direction as they care for children, and model a healthy family environment for them.

This year's BCV Annual Offering goal is \$400,000.00. Please help us reach our goal.

To order materials to help promote this offering please call 601-922-2242 or email [bcv@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:bcv@baptistchildrensvillage.com). You can mail your gifts to:

The Baptist Children's Village  
P.O. Box 27 • Clinton, MS 39060-0027  
601-922-2242 (phone) • 601-952-2906 (fax)  
[www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com)

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Powell-Walley Campus  
Waynesboro

Deanash Campus  
Wiggins

Ramey Cottage  
Nantahala

## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

### Overcome Your Fears

Joshua 1:1-11, 16-18

By Bobby McKay

I conducted some research on the topic of fears recently. The information that I learned was not what I expected. For example, did you know there are over 500 documented fears or phobias recognized by psychologists? Obviously if it exists, someone out there is afraid of it. Included on this inventory of fears are the common ones such as fear of spiders, height, and public speaking. Other fears that might surprise you include the fear of dust, gravity, chop sticks, and telephones. There is even a condition called phobophobia; the fear of phobias. One final fear worth noting that is listed may explain a condition that has afflicted many Baptists. It is called homophobia; the fear of sermons.

No matter how common or unusual your fears are, if left

unresolved, they will affect you and those around you and could prevent us from being all God desires for us to be. Now think about this question: what would happen if leaders continually caved into their fears and uncertainties? A characterization of a good leader is based largely on his or her ability to face challenges with resolve and confidence. Our study this month turns our attention to the subject of leadership. More specifically, spiritual leadership. Did you know that someone looks to you for leadership? It's true. Everyone is a leader to some degree. The question is whether or not you are a good leader or one that could use some help. Henry Blackaby is well known for defining spiritual leadership as, "Moving



McKay

this week and the lessons we can all heed.

#### Step Up!

I have always felt that Joshua 1:1 is one of the most important verses in the bible. It lets us know that a new day has come. Moses has died and a new leader emerges. That leader was Joshua. Joshua showed great patience and faith through the whole wilderness experience. Don't forget he was one of the two men that believed they could possess the promised land many years before. He did not let fear hinder his faith. He was now rewarded by God as the one to step up and lead His people

people from where they are to where God wants them to be." When we have that type of desire, we can begin to face and overcome our fears as well as be the kind of leader that God can use in mighty ways. We read about Joshua this week and the lessons we can all heed.

into the land of milk and honey. All of this was made possible after the death of Moses. There is no doubt that Joshua was following a legend, but with God's blessing on your life, you can have unparalleled favor too. If that's not enough, think about this: Moses never entered the promised land and Joshua did. When faced with an overwhelming task, we must focus on the fact that God is with us.

#### Listen Up!

Every good leader knows how to listen and Joshua was no exception. We must take note however, in these verses he was listening to what God had to say and not people. Often times those that are leaders in the church become so consumed with the chatter of the members, the voice of the Lord becomes hard to hear. God commands Joshua to listen up and be courageous in the face of fear. He challenged Joshua not to tremble or become discouraged. Those same words are appropriate for you and me

too. When the noise of this world becomes too much to handle; listen up, God wants to talk to you.

#### Follow Up!

Mark Twain once said that if you are leading and no one is following, you are just taking a walk. In verse 16 we see an awesome display of God's people following God's man in obedience. One proof of effective leadership is the response of the followers. On the other hand, Joshua had to obey God and trust Him before God allowed him to lead. Great spiritual leaders inspire others to pursue God and equip others to do the same. Joshua genuinely loved these people and his life was spent attempting to show them a better life with God. With these reminders now fresh in our minds, I hope that you will not be guilty of Gnosophobia, the fear of knowledge!

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Expressing the Truth

Colossians 1:21-27

By Cyndi Grace

As a too-tall, awkward teen, my desire was to be a part of the "in-group" who seemed to know everything...how to dress, how to talk, where to go...but I felt like an outsider who didn't belong. It seemed that everyone else got the manual of how to be cool but me! That is one reason I love our lesson today. Paul states in verse 21 that once we were alienated but now reconciled and that means believers are a part of a very special group...we are those in the "know!" He didn't mean it as a point of pride but to confirm what a privilege and responsibility it is to be a Christian. Those who lived before Messiah's birth wondered about the prophecies and died still wondering, but we read in I Peter 1:12 "It was revealed to them that they were not

serving themselves but you, [the church] when they spoke of the things you have now been told." (NIV) The prophecies were for us so we could see God's plan from the beginning. We who have Christ as Lord are the ones the "mystery" of the ages (which had been hinted at, talked about, and longed for) had been made clear. It has been revealed through the Word. Our reconciliation has made us holy in His sight! So, now that we are a part of this group what are we going to do about it?

Paul encouraged the believers to accept the responsibility of sharing this knowledge with others. Even as this is said, some will think, "Oh, another lesson on evangelism..." But if we look deeper into verse 28 it is more than just telling others about Christ...yes, we are to



Grace

first proclaim Him but that is not where it ends! We are to continue to admonish and teach believers with wisdom—in other words—discipline them. False teaching and paganism was widespread in the area of Colosse drawing many believers away from truth. Paul pleaded that each believer must hold on to and continue to teach the truth to everyone. Have we done a good job in this? Often, we tell someone about salvation and when he or she accepts, we rejoice but then leave him or her alone to discover how to live as victorious Christians. We need to invest our lives into their lives making sure they build a firm foundation in Christ; a foundation of the truth of the word of God. Why? Paul says, so everyone can be presented as mature [perfect NIV] in Christ! (vs28)

In chapter 2, Paul mentions a group for whom he was specifically praying—those in

Laodicea. The city of Laodicea was only twelve miles from Colosse so the Colossians were probably acquainted with those Paul was referring to. The Laodicean church had "truth" problems and Paul desired that the Colossians would go and disciple them to grow in love so they could have a complete understanding of Christ "where all treasures of wisdom and knowledge were to be found." (vs 2:3) Paul, in prison, had the heart and desire but the Colossians had the opportunity. Did they follow through? I don't know but the last time we hear of the Laodicean church is in Revelation 3:14-18. Perhaps no one went...perhaps they did, but somehow truth was not established in this body of believers.

Some might think that could never happen now, but within some churches doctrines are being taught that are not Biblical...the messages are popular but not truth. They sound good but will lead to places far from

God's truth. Because Christian foundational truths were not established many are being deceived by these messages. We can no longer assume that everything that calls itself Christian is what the Bible calls Christian. Many have so distorted the "mystery, which has been revealed" that we can no longer sit idly by. Now, more than ever we need to be teaching absolute truth and strong doctrine to believers both old and young. It is not enough to "get folks saved!" we must fervently disciple them in the Word. Truth, no matter how unpopular, must be expressed if we are to present everyone as mature believers. Who are you discipling? Who are you teaching and warning? This is your call. Don't be satisfied with the status quo. Let the warning of the church in Laodicea be our warning, as well. We have been given the truth of this, very special mystery...let's not keep it to ourselves.

Grace is a conference speaker and Bible teacher and is a member of First Church, Clinton.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

# Record



# Easter events stymied as Viet officials sow confusion

HANOI, Vietnam (BP) — Authorities in Hanoi prevented much-anticipated Easter-themed celebrations of the Centennial of Protestantism in Vietnam featuring Luis Palau on April 15-16, Compass Direct News reported April 18.

In Ho Chi Minh City the previous weekend, however, similar celebrations featuring Palau — the first preaching appearance by a U.S.-based evangelist at a major event since the 1975 communist victory in Vietnam — received last-minute approval and went ahead, with an estimated 1,800 decisions for Christ in response to the evangelist's messages.

In Hanoi, the celebrations were thwarted although organizers had received a verbal promise that they could proceed. An interchurch organizing committee for the planned celebrations with Palau had submitted a request for permission well in advance and had made elaborate preparations, Compass reported.

The organizers said they were disappointed but not entirely surprised by the communist government's action. "The authorities have clearly demonstrated to the world what we experience regularly — that their promises, whether verbal or written, cannot be trusted," one church leader who requested anonymity told Compass.

Asked to speculate on the reasons for the government's ultimate refusal, another key church leader said, "I don't know why, but it almost seems as if the government is deliberately damaging its own reputation."

Shortly after 1 p.m. on April 15 after long negotiations, authorities gave verbal assent for the celebrations to proceed, promising the required written permission would be issued imminently. The government-approved venue was the Dien Kinh My Dinh Sports Complex, a state-of-the-art indoor track and field stadium that reportedly holds 3,100 people in Hanoi's Tu Liem district.

Organizers had requested a venue with considerably larger capacity, Compass reported. After receiving the verbal promise, organizers said they went directly to the sports complex hoping to begin preparing the sound and lighting systems. They were not given access.

When no written permission was forthcoming by the scheduled start at 7 p.m., organizers said they were forced to turn away many hundreds of people arriving from the provinces by chartered buses. They said they urged the people to return home quietly and to pray for the event scheduled for the next evening.

Late Friday evening, the organizing committee received written permission from the Hanoi People's Committee to hold what was to have been the second night of the event on, April 16. They said they immediately posted the document on Vietnam's most popular Christian website [www.hoithanh.com](http://www.hoithanh.com).

Apparently, however, public security and city authorities quietly overrode the reluctant permission granted by Vietnam's religion bureaucracy. Organizers told Compass that even with the official letter from the People's Committee, several hurdles had remained. They still needed to secure a contract from the sports complex on Saturday morning for use of the facilities and they had yet to request the Committee for Religious Affairs for permission for Palau to speak.

Early on Saturday, pastor Nguyen Huu Mac, president of the registered Evangelical Church of Vietnam (North), or ECVN(N), who had signed the request, went with colleagues from unregistered house churches to the sports complex to pursue the contract. When they were told that Saturday was not a work day, they went to the Tu Liem district office.

There they were stalled for several more hours by fruitless discussion. District officials eventually told them that although the sports complex was in their area of the city, it was owned and managed by another entity over which they had no control.

Finally, at 1 p.m., the manager of the sports complex arrived. Compass reported that the manager proceeded to give the Christian leaders unreasonable conditions for a contract. For instance, the manager said they could not enter the complex to prepare until 4:30 p.m. — hardly enough time for the scheduled 7 p.m. start. Organizers said he further told them that the sports complex would retain control over who and how many entered the building; he said they would not honor the



VIETNAM TODAY — Stands with an abundance of fruit, clothing, coffee, and trinkets line the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The markets are filled with the smell of durian and mangosteen (types of fruit), beef, and fish. Communist officials in the Asian nation have recently given conflicting messages on allowing Christian gatherings. (BP photo)

tickets/invitations that had been widely distributed by organizers but would distribute their own and count every head.

The organizers sensed trouble. Faced with such government duplicity and control over their event and without enough time to set up properly, church leaders said they unanimously decided they could not proceed with integrity. Shortly after 4 p.m., they issued an indefinite postponement notice.

Reached by Compass late Saturday Hanoi time, a Luis Palau spokesman reported that the evangelist had just spent significant time encouraging the tired organizers. Palau told them that the Lord would bless their diligence and predicted that they would soon reap a great spiritual harvest, according to the spokesman. In a few years, Palau said, they would look on the disappointments of the weekend as insignificant.

Despite their disappointment, church leaders took note of gains: The effort to stage the events, they said, marked unprecedented cooperation among various groups, with the ECVN(N), the only registered church based in the north, applying for the permission document on behalf of all groups. Cooperating in the organizing were northern house churches belonging to the Hanoi Christian Fellowship and southern-based house churches belonging to the Vietnam Evangelical Fellowship as well as some smaller groups.

Together, the church leaders said, they determined not to bow to government manipulation and pressure. "Clearly someone at the top disallowed these events and then left it to clumsy underlings to create bureaucratic obstacles," a longtime overseas Vietnam analyst told Compass. "Most people will see through this ruse and recognize simple lack of religious freedom."

It is uncertain whether the cancellation of the events in Hanoi will affect plans for the

Evangelical Church of Vietnam, both the northern and southern entities, to include Palau in their June centennial celebrations in Danang, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City. Permission has been long requested, but so far the government has only given general verbal approval.

In Ho Chi Minh City the previous weekend, permission requested months in advance was granted, but at a venue several kilometers from the one organizers sought just three hours before the first celebration of the 1911-2011 Protestantism centennial in Vietnam.

The venue change meant equipment located in one part of the city had to be moved to the new location before it could be assembled, church leaders said. It also meant notifying many thousands of people invited to one venue about the change to the other, they said.

Given the lack of government cooperation, the leader of Vietnam's Evangelical Fellowship (of house churches) said the fact that the event went ahead at all was "an absolute miracle."

By word-of-mouth, Internet, Twitter, Facebook and especially phone texting, thousands of people got word of the change as technicians and hundreds of volunteers made heroic efforts to ready the new venue. Vietnamese police proved surprisingly helpful in redirecting people to the new location.

At 9 p.m., two hours after the schedule start of the first service on April 9, huge banners reading "Pray for Vietnam" and "God Loves Vietnam" were unfurled to welcome Palau's team and thousands of people to the festival, which joyfully combined the centennial celebration with Easter.

Palau began his evangelistic message at 11 p.m., with about 800 coming forward as he invited people to receive Christ. It was after midnight before people began to depart for their homes.

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